

COG Readies Housing Study

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The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments expects to have ready by the end of the year a preliminary study indicating what parts of the Washington area have less than their "fair share" of low- and moderate-income housing.

The "fair share" plan to equalize the distribution of such housing was endorsed last week by Housing and Urban Development Secretary George Romney and denounced by Rep. Joel T. Broyhill, R-Va.

Ruth Crone, a member of the staff of COG's housing committee, said the staff is now working on a formula for evaluating the supply of and demand for inexpensive housing. By January, she said, COG should have a tentative ranking of how the need is being met in each area jurisdiction.

The plan, in the works at COG for about a year, has several goals. By making sure that each

locality can house everyone employed there, the COG planners hope to give workers a greater choice of where they can live, reduce traffic, match more jobs with workers and improve the financial health of the metropolitan area.

Factors

Among the factors being evaluated are overcrowded housing, the number of commuters in different income brackets, substandard housing, elderly persons on limited incomes, the number of existing housing, vacant housing, tax bases of localities, the concentration of low-income housing and accessibility of jobs and housing.

In recent years there has been a revival of interest in matching housing and jobs as jobs in all income levels have moved to the suburbs. The COG study will be the first comprehensive look at the metropolitan area's situation from so many points of view.

Low-cost housing is believed to be concentrated in the central city, Prince Georges County and Alexandria while more jobs are moving to the western suburbs. The study should show how great the disparity is.

Mrs. Crone said COG hopes to work with federal housing authorities to encourage a desirable spread of low- and moderate-income housing. Others have suggested that the federal government could grant or withhold various types of funds and locate its offices according to how each jurisdiction rated in the supply of low-cost housing.

Sees No Look-Alikes

Mrs. Crone said compliance with the program would be voluntary and expressed confidence the jurisdictions will want to have a balanced population. She said she did not think the COG plan will lead to a series of

look-alike communities in the area because of all the factors involved.

Broyhill said the COG plan "smacks of forced intergration" and might lead to "mass movements of families from existing communities." He was responding to Romney, who told COG his department "will be happy to reward" jurisdictions for increasing low-income housing.

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